



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	European Social Fund (ESF) match funding requests
Date:	18 March 2014
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that European Social Fund (ESF) Priority One provides financial support to promote training and other activities to assist long term unemployed people obtain sustainable employment. Funding is awarded through an open call for projects. Successful applicants are allocated funding on condition that they can provide 35% match funding from another public sector source.
1.2	The ESF projects are funded through Department of Employment and Learning (DEL). Match funding must be secured on an annual basis. These offers are based on the project being able to draw in the appropriate levels of match funding. All funding from DEL is subject to the agreed match funding being in place. Requests for match funding from five projects for the next financial year 2014-2015 have now been received by Belfast City Council. In addition, the council has led on a project and there is also a requirement to seek match funding for this project for the coming year. One of the projects (East Belfast Mission) has not yet submitted the match funding request to Belfast City Council. If this is forthcoming, it will be presented to a future meeting of the Development Committee for consideration.
1.3	At the March 2013 meeting of the Development Committee, Members agreed to provide match funding to the following ESF projects for 2013-2014: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast City Council with project partner Lisburn City Council – Hospitality and Retail Training and Employment (HARTE) £25,000; - East Belfast Mission - Jobs4U £12,485; - Lenadoon Community Forum - Neighbourhood Training for Employment £12,010; and - Time Associates/Belfast Metropolitan College - Learn to Earn £6,000.
1.4	At the May 2013 meeting of the Development Committee, Members agreed to provide match funding to the following ESF projects for 2013-2014:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT) - Jobs on the Move £30,000; - Ashton Community Trust - Progress to Employment £33,642.65; and - Ashton Community Trust - Women's Training Project £13,856.02.
1.5	Members will recall from the May 2013 meeting that the original letters of offer from DEL were issued on the basis of a three-year programme. DEL wrote to all project promoters to confirm that they could offer funding to the approved projects for an additional year (2014-2015) should the project promoters wish to take this offer up. They also confirmed that they were in a position to offer an uplift of 25% in the funding available to interested projects. In both instances, offers were based on the project being able to draw in the appropriate levels of match funding.
1.6	Members will recall that the offer of 25% uplift has led to some projects having difficulty in being able to get agreement from their match funder to provide the additional funding to allow them to draw down the extra money from DEL.
1.7	Many Belfast-based ESF projects are match-funded by the Department of Social Development (DSD). The office confirmed that, while it is in a position to commit the match-funding at the previous levels of expenditure in the original letters of offer, it is not in a position to provide the match-funding for the increased amount (i.e. to meet the 25% uplift offer from DEL). This remains the case for 2014-2015.
1.8	These offers are based on the project being able to draw in the appropriate levels of match funding. Without funding, the six programmes will be unable to operate.
1.9	Members will also be aware that officers have been engaging with DEL to identify a way in which the match funding provided by the council and other public sector bodies can be used to contribute to targeted delivery, as opposed to on a case-by-case basis as is currently the way of working. Some progress is being made in this regard and it is anticipated that this will help the council measure more directly the impact of our interventions of the key employment and skills challenges in the city.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The six projects that are seeking support from Belfast City Council for the next financial year 2014-2015 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ashton Community Trust: Women's Training Project - Ashton Community Trust: Progress to Employment - Lenadoon Community Forum – Neighbourhood Training for Employment - Time Associates/Belfast Metropolitan College – Learn to Earn - Upper Springfield Development Trust – Jobs on the Move - Belfast City Council - HARTE
2.2	Details on the areas of focus of each project are outlined below. A summary of outputs achieved as well as targets for the coming financial year and the match funding required from the council is included in Appendix 1 .
2.3	<p><u>Ashton Community Trust – Women's Training Project</u></p> <p>The Women's Training Project focuses on improving the employability of those women experiencing significant employment gaps, lone parents, those returning</p>

	<p>to the labour market and women with little or no qualifications. The project aims to offer women training which will increase basic and intermediate skills and a mentor to support clients through one-to-one support and advice and guidance. There is also a team member employed to support those not in employment, education and training (NEET). This was introduced as part of the match funding provided through council.</p>
2.4	<p>In the first three quarters of 2013-2014, 124 participants received accredited training and 38 went into employment of which 15 were NEETs clients. Outputs for the period 2014-2015 are envisaged to remain the same figures and the programme will continue to work with NEET clients.</p>
2.5	<p>The amount of funding offered by DEL to Women's Training Project in the 2014-2015 financial year (including the uplift) is £101,461. At present, DSD have committed to providing match funding of £38,868.98. This leaves a shortfall of £13,856.02 to allow the full amount to be drawn down.</p>
2.6	<p><u>Ashton Community Trust – Progress to Employment project</u> The Progress to Employment programme provides participants with access to accredited training and resources that will improve their skills and improve their chances of a more sustainable future in employment. It focuses on training to match participants' skills with employer's requirements. A mentor further supports clients through one-to-one support and advice and guidance.</p>
2.7	<p>In the first three quarters of the financial year 2013-2014, 314 participants availed of training and support, 121 undertook accredited training and 96 entered into employment (40 were NEET clients), surpassing targets set. Outputs for the period 2014-2015 are projected to remain the same as 2013-2014. The programme will continue to target the NEET category.</p>
2.8	<p>It is envisaged that the targets will be maintained for the final year of the project. A match funding request of £33,642.65 has been received by Belfast City Council to contribute to the project, which has an overall value of £373,850 for the coming financial year.</p>
2.9	<p><u>Lenadoon Community Forum - Neighbourhood Training for Employment</u> The progress report received from Lenadoon Community Forum indicates that the project is on course to achieve its targets in terms of engaging with individuals and placing them into employment, training or further education. Participants have undertaken courses in Numeracy and Literacy Levels 2 (GCSE grade C equivalent), Text/Word Processing Suite Levels 1-3, Business Administration, Sage Payroll Level 2, Computerised Payroll Levels 1 and 2. To date this year, 265 people have been recruited, 163 have gained recognised qualifications, 28 have gone into further education and 22 into employment. Outputs for the coming year are expected to remain in line with the results delivered in the current year.</p>
2.10	<p>In April 2014 after four years decanted to various sites, the Lenadoon Community Forum will move into a new building and the Training For Employment Project will be operate in a brand new IT suite and training room. This is a good opportunity to engage new participants and bring together services such as childcare and counselling under one roof. As well as serving Lenadoon residents, participants who have availed of services in the past reside in the Suffolk and Dunmurry communities. The new building is adjacent to the interface and this will ensure greater access to services for residents from all</p>

	sections of the community.
2.11	In order to roll out the training support in this coming financial year, the project promoters have asked the council to provide match funding of £12,010 towards a project with an overall value of £124,000.
2.12	<u>Time Associates/Belfast Metropolitan College – Learn to Earn</u> Time Associates' 2013-2014 progress report to date indicates that the Learn to Earn project engaged with 43 participants (annual target 32). Of these, 14 found employment or went into self-employment and the participants amassed a total of 162 qualifications as part of their engagement in the programme. These include CCEA Exploring Enterprise; ILM Team Leader Award, CIEH Food Hygiene and Health Safety certificate. The project is on course to achieving all project outputs and in the quarter four forecasts, a further 50 qualifications will bring the total to 212. This year also seen the project expand its employer engagement activities with strong links being established with the Ten Square group and Odyssey Arena.
2.13	In the coming financial year, project promoters anticipate that they will recruit at least 32 participants who will collectively achieve in excess of 150 qualifications. 14 of the participants will find employment and 10 will go into further education. In order to achieve these results, they are seeking match funding of £6,000 from Belfast City Council.
2.14	<u>Upper Springfield Development Trust – Jobs on the Move</u> The progress report received from USDT indicates that the project is on course to exceed its targets in terms of engaging with individuals and placing them into employment. Project promoters have worked with 265 individuals, helping 48 into employment and an additional 105 have undertaken accredited training up to December 2013.
2.15	Within this financial year, a number of participants have undertaken work placement and training with the council as part of pre-recruitment programmes. Eight posts have been ring-fenced for individuals from that group (recruited following a competitive interview process). Client completed 'Roots to Wings' programme with Hendersons, Strive to Work pre-employment programme with First Source and Stream and undertook work placements with Marks & Spencer, negotiation of work placements as part of the employability working group with Belfast HSC Trust.
2.16	In the coming year, it is planned that the project will provide one-to-one mentoring and support to 300 participants, helping at least 10% of those find employment within the project. Match funding from council of £30,000 is being sought for this project, as a contribution to a project with an overall value of £246,462.
2.17	<u>Belfast City Council/Lisburn City Council – HARTE</u> Between April and December 2013, 41 participants completed the HARTE programme. 41 people gained employment (figures include some people from year two of the programme who have just received employment), 32 people gained Level Two qualifications in industry recognised fields such as customer care, health and safety, food hygiene, World Host and team leadership. Participants have gone on to "next steps" training including "service of food at a table" and "preparing and serving wines".

2.18	<p>In August 2013 to coincide with the World Police and Fire Games, 14 trainees from the HARTE programme took up the challenge of running HARTE@theMET pop up restaurant at the Belfast Met Titanic Quarter Campus. Programme participants were involved in all aspects of this intervention which included marketing, menu preparation and planning. Trainees cooked and served over 900 'covers'. They put to use the hospitality skills that they received training in including good customer service, catering and beverage services.</p>
2.19	<p>As a result of this valuable work experience, six people have gained full-time employment. A new relationship was formed with the Odyssey Arena who organised a recruitment drive for past and present HARTE participants. Seven participants gained part-time casual employment.</p>
2.20	<p>From April 2011 to December 2013, HARTE has performed strongly against targets as per letter of offer with DEL and the agreement with Belfast City Council It shows that HARTE has surpassed its target in six areas. There are strong mentoring, employer engagement and job search elements in the HARTE programme. Contact is maintained not only with participants on the current year of a programme, but also with past HARTE participants. They are contacted and invited to attend interviews with employers when opportunities arise. This ensures that participants receive help and support they need to progress in the labour market. This service comes at no additional cost to the project.</p>
2.21	<p>In the coming year, four HARTE programmes are planned, involving 60 long term unemployed people. Participants will be provided with accredited training and will be given dedicated pre-employment support and mentoring to help them find a job within the relevant field. The project will require match funding of £25,000 from Belfast City Council for the coming year, with £15,000 coming from Lisburn City Council. The overall project cost is £142,000.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The total match funding requirements for the projects in the coming financial year are £120,508.67.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	No specific equality and good relations implications. These will be tested by DEL as part of the funding application process.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members are asked to consider match-funding requests for the six projects as identified above in order to meet the targets as set out in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women's Training Project: £13,856.02 - Progress to Employment: £33,642.65 - Neighbourhood Training for Employment: £12,010 - Learn2earn: £6,000 - Jobs on the Move: £30,000 - HARTE: £25,000

6	Decision Tracking
6.1	Update reports will be presented to committee on an annual basis.

7	Key to Abbreviations
6.1	DSD – Department of Social Development DEL – Department of Employment and Learning EBM – East Belfast Mission HARTE – Hospitality and Retail Training for Employment LEMIS – Local Employment Intermediary Service NEET – Not in Education, Training or Employment USDT – Upper Springfield Development Trust